their fingertips—these little kids that are 10 years old—so when they sew with needles and stick their fingertips with a needle, they can't feel it because they have been scarred by burned gunpowder, so the kids can continue to sew and not bleed. Then that product, that carpet, is sent to the United States, and someone shows up and says: I would like to buy that carpet, wouldn't I? It is made with slave labor, in many cases, with children whose hands have been burned to prevent the bleeding from needles to make that carpet. Is that really what we want? Is that really the construct of trade that we believe represents a free market? I don't think so.

There is much more to say, and I will say it at some future point.

I think today's announcement—just an hour and a half ago now—about the devastating January trade deficit numbers ought to at least justify calling Air Force One back to this town and asking the President to join us, join labor, and join the National Association of Manufacturers in a meeting, a summit to talk about what on Earth we do to repair this trade deficit that is just crushing to the future economic opportunities in this country.

I will have more to say. I hope that this weekend, the White House and the Congress will reflect on what this announcement means for the future of our country and begin to deal with the crisis that does exist. No, not Social Security—it is not a crisis—but the crisis exists in these crippling, devastating trade deficit numbers.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

SHOOTING IN ATLANTA

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about something dear and near my heart.

Before I do, I want to mention that we in Arkansas and everyone in the Senate joins with you, Mr. President, in your prayers and our prayers for the very tragic, bad news coming out of Atlanta right now. We want you to know that anything we can do, we want to try to help in every way we can.

COMMEMORATIVE COIN IN HONOR OF THE LITTLE ROCK NINE

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, thank you for allowing me a few moments to speak about something I care very deeply about; that is, I am going to introduce a bill that would create a commemorative coin in honor of the 50th anniversary of desegregation of Little Rock Central High School in Little Rock, AR.

The bill I am introducing with my colleague, Senator BLANCHE LINCOLN, is a companion measure to the work of our Arkansas colleague, Arkansas Congressman VIC SNYDER.

Once again, Congressman SNYDER has shown himself to be quiet and effective and really able to get things done over in the House, not just for our States but for our Nation.

Imitation is the greatest form of flattery, and I am here today to introduce identical language to Congressman SNYDER's H.R. 358. I was excited to see that 319 members of the House of Representatives cosponsored Congressman SNYDER's bill. It is my hope that I will have similar success in the Senate.

The bill requires the Secretary of the Treasury to mint a coin in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the desegregation of Little Rock Central High School in Little Rock. I believe this will serve as a timeless reminder of an event that provided a landmark change in our school system.

Let me remind my colleagues about the desegregation crisis that took place at Little Rock Central High School and why this event is so important.

In 1952, the Little Rock school board wanted to follow the rule of law and took the Brown v. Board of Education, Topeka, KS, case seriously, that momentous decision from 1954. When the U.S. Supreme Court used the phrase ''all deliberate speed,'' the Little Rock school board thought that it could begin to comply with the Supreme Court's ruling beginning in the 1957 school year.

In 1957, nine black teenagers integrated the all white Central High School in Little Rock, AR, testing the Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court decision that ultimately ended legal segregation in schools.

As these nine teenagers attempted to enter the doors of Central High, they were confronted with an angry, rampaging mob. President Eisenhower ordered Federal troops to Little Rock to end the brutal intimidation campaign mounted against the black students and to uphold Brown and Federal law.

The ''Little Rock Nine''—Ernest Green, Elizabeth Eckford, Gloria Ray Karlmark, Carlotta Walls LaNier, Minnijean Brown Trickey, Terrence Roberts, Jefferson Thomas, Thelma Mothershed Wair and Melba Pattillo Beals—changed the course of American history by claiming and exercising the right to receive an equal education.

They were helped in this important endeavor by civil rights pioneer Daisy Bates who raised public awareness of their plight.

Of her experience, Melba Pattillo Beals recalls:

> I had to become a warrior. I had to learn not how to dress the best but how to get from that door to the end of the hall without dying.

Another one of those students was Ernest Green, who best explains why the Little Rock Nine sacrificed their innocence for a chance at a better education. He said:

> We wanted to widen options for ourselves and later for our children.

Mr. Green was the first black student to graduate from Central High School. He later served as Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Affairs under President Jimmy Carter and as vice president of Lehman Brothers.

Turning opportunity into achievement is what civil rights pioneer Daisy Bates had in mind when she led the Little Rock Nine to break down the barriers that stood between them and an equal education.

Despite threats on her life and of financial ruin, Daisy Bates made significant strides in the courtroom and increased public awareness through the newspaper she and her husband, L.C. Bates, published.

As a former student of Central High—and by the way, I note that we have another student of Little Rock Central High in our presence today as one of our pages—I can tell you the impact of the Little Rock Nine and Daisy Bates is still felt in my heart and in the halls of Central High.

The acts of courage, self-sacrifice, and grit by the Little Rock Nine should be shared with our current generation and the generations to follow.

It took nine young high school students to prove to our Nation that ''all men are created equal'' and that the rule of law is paramount in the democracy of the United States.

Today, children all over America have the right to learn because of the courage and sacrifice of the Little Rock Nine. A commemorative coin will bring national and international attention to the lasting legacy of this important event. With this legislation, 500,000 $1 dollar coins will be minted by the Treasury.

These coins will be minted with symbols emblematic of the desegregation of the Little Rock Central High School and its contribution to civil rights in America; bear the year ''2007''; and include the inscripted words ''Liberty'', ''In God We Trust'', ''United States of America'', and ''E Pluribus Unum'', which means, out of many, one. Little Rock Central High School helped us to become one nation.

To cover the cost of the coins, the Secretary of Treasury shall sell the coins at face value with a surcharge to cover the cost of production and design.

The courage of the ''Little Rock Nine'' (who stood in the face of violence, was one of the defining moments of the Civil Rights movement and changed American history by providing a foundation upon which to build greater equality.

I hope that the Senate will join me in passing this measure to commemorate the Little Rock Nine and the desegregation of Little Rock Central High School.

I urge my colleagues to cosponsor this bill and allow the measure to move forward in an effort to ensure that these extraordinary achievements are recorded and shared for future generations.

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, today I rise, along with my friend, colleague and fellow Arkansan, Senator MARK

PRYOR, to introduce a bill to direct the Treasury to mint a commemorative coin in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the integration of Central High School in Little Rock, AR.

Our colleagues in the House have led the way in this effort with a bill written by Representative VIC SNYDER and co-sponsored by the entire Arkansas delegation.

On September 2, 1957, nine African-American students made their way to the front doors of Central High School in the city of Little Rock, AR. In our modern era, this seems like a very normal moment. And in truth there is nothing particularly special about students making their way to school on the first day of class. However, in 1957, this was a Nation changing event.

Ernest Green, Elizabeth Eckford, Jefferson Thomas, Terrence Roberts, Carlotta Walls, Minnijean Brown, Gloria Ray, Thelma Mothershed and Melba Pattillo showed courage in the face of strong opposition. Their principled stand helped to move the State and the Nation forward as it marched toward greater equality for all.

What happened in Little Rock almost 50 years ago is not only a testament to the Little Rock Nine, but it is also a testament to those who supported them. It is a testament to the people of Little Rock of all hues who decided that they would confront their own consciences. And it is testament to those who, upon reflecting on the matter, decided that doing what is right was worth the cost.

Theie decision to move this Nation forward makes me proud to be an Arkansan. It makes me proud to be an American. That's why I'm especially pleased to introduce this legislation to direct the Treasury to issue these commemorative coins. This bill is a small token of recognition of the gift that the Little Rock nine and the entire Little Rock community has given to this Nation.

I believe that someone who was there can say it better than I can. At the 20th anniversary of the integration of Central High, Ralph G. Brodie, the '57–58 student body president, spoke at a special ceremony where he paid tribute to the Little Rock Nine. He addressed the three of the Little Rock Nine who were present saying: ''You've done much to assure the rights of others. Yours were acts of courage, and I salute you.''

I join him. I salute the Little Rock Nine and I salute those, both black and white, who helped to successfully integrate Central High School.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE GUN INDUSTRY IMMUNITY BILL

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I am disappointed to see the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act reintroduced. I supported the successful effort to defeat the gun industry immunity legislation during the 108th Congress and I continue to oppose the legislation.

The misnamed ''Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act'' would rewrite well-accepted principles of liability law, providing the gun industry legal protections not enjoyed by other industries. In addition, this bill would set a dangerous precedent by terminating a wide range of pending and prospective civil cases against members of the gun industry. It would give a single industry broad immunity from civil liability and deprive many victims of gun violence with legitimate cases of their day in court.

While most gun dealers and manufacturers conduct their business responsibly, this gun industry immunity legislation would provide protection from liability even in cases where gross negligence or recklessness lead to someone being injured or killed.

The reintroduction of this bill comes after the Supreme Court recently allowed a civil suit against members of the gun industry to progress in California. Reportedly, the plaintiffs in this case allege that the gun manufacturer being sued distributed guns to dealers who were likely to sell them illegally or through largely unregulated gun shows. Judge Richard Paez of the Ninth Circuit wrote of this case: The social value of manufacturing and distributing guns without taking basic steps to prevent these guns from reaching illegal purchasers and possessors cannot outweigh the public interest in keeping the guns out of the hands of those who in turn use them in crimes.

Last year, in a settlement that marked victory for the 2002 Washington, DC, area sniper shooting victims, Bushmaster Firearms, manufacturer of the XM–15 assault rifle used in the sniper attacks, agreed to pay $550,000 in damages for negligence leading to criminal violence in connection with the shooting spree.

According to reports, Bushmaster continued to sell firearms, including the XM–15 assault rifle used in the sniper shootings, to Bull's Eye Shooter Supply in Tacoma, WA, even after several ATF audits documented the dealer's inability to responsibly account for its inventory of weapons. Reports indicate that 238 guns had gone missing from Bull's Eye's inventory and over 50 had been traced to criminal acts since 1997. The victims of the sniper shootings would have lost their ability to sue Bushmaster Firearms and Bull's Eye Shooter Supply had the gun industry immunity bill become law during the 108th Congress.

If it is enacted, this bill would substantially weaken the legal rights of gun violence victims. In addition, other industries will almost certainly line up for similar protections. This is unwise legislation and it should not be adopted.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

HOOSIER ESSAY CONTEST WINNERS

• Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I rise today to share with my colleagues the winners of the 2004–2005 Dick Lugar/Indiana Farm Bureau/Farm Bureau Insurance Companies Youth Essay Contest.

In 1985, I joined with the Indiana Farm Bureau to sponsor an essay contest for eighth grade students in my home State. The purpose of this contest was to encourage young Hoosiers to recognize and appreciate the importance of Indiana agriculture in their lives and subsequently, craft an essay responding to the assigned theme. I, along with my friends at the Indiana Farm Bureau and Farm Bureau Insurance Companies, am pleased with the annual response to this contest and the quality of the essays received over the years.

I congratulate Thomas (Trey) Dunn III of Jay County and Brittany Lechner of Daviess County as winners of this year's contest. Likewise, I include the names of all of the district and county winners of the 2004–2005 Dick Lugar/Indiana Farm Bureau/Farm Bureau Insurance Companies Youth Essay Contest.

I ask that the following materials be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to the printed in the RECORD, as follows:

THE PERFECT PIZZA BEGINS ON HOOSIER FARMS

(By Thomas (Trey) Dunn III, Jay County)

Set for the kick-off,
We work as a team.
Joining together,
To accomplish our dream
We'll celebrate the victory.
It's time to begin.
The perfect Hoosier pizza,
Will help your body win!

BUZZ! ''The final in tonight's football contest is Junk Food 0, Hoosier Pizza 100 percent healthy! Stay tuned, we'll recap tonight's game and we will be joined by the workhorses on the team; the 4 basic food groups.''

''Mr. Grain, I thought your unit looked especially good in the first quarter.'' ''Indiana farmers prepared Wil Wheat, Otis Oat, and Sam Soybean well for this game. They mixed it up right away and they were the gluten that held us together. They rolled out with a great foundation and used their carbohydrates to keep us energized.''

''Mr. Fruit A. Veg, the second quarter definitely belonged to your members.'' ''I thought the Tomato triplets were really firm tonight, as grown by our Indiana farmers. Their play was smashing! They spread the defense all over the field. The Mushrooms and Peppers sliced their way through tonight also. Vitamins A and C worked hard at keeping us focused and alert throughout.''

''Mr. Meat, the third quarter was great!'' ''Thanks, Indiana farmers really came